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PLACES



PLACES

BY
ROGER L. WARING

IN THE HEART

IN LIFE

IN NATURE

IN FUN



NEW YORK
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1928



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TO
TWO OF THE FINEST WOMEN
IN THE WORLD—
MY WIFE AND MY MOTHER



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IN THE HEART

BUD OF A ROSE

Bud of a rose, greenish and brown,
Guarded by thorns that prickle and prick,
Weighting the end of a stemlet down,
Bearded with stubble, shaggy and thick.

Heart of a boy, rough coated and small,
Shown to the world thru an unsmiling face
Living a life that is thotless of all,
Holding small promise of beauty and grace.

Budding, you harbor no hint of a flower;
Blooming, what beauty of love you disclose
Under the smile of a sun and a shower,
Heart of a boy, and bud of a rose.

CONCEIT

Conceit is such a narrow thing,
Humility so broad;
For who are you, and who am I
Beside Almighty God?

His million myriads of stars
That prick the purple night
Are each a world as great as ours
With all the breadth and height.
If we could look upon our earth
From yonder twinkling fleck,
Our straining gaze could hardly see
The tiny sparkling speck;
Our Continents, our oceans;
Or the wonders we have wrought
Would dwindle into nothingness,
Then shrink to less than nought.

Let's let our spirits soar afar,
Turn, search and find our earth,
Then pause, and see how small we are
And what conceit is worth.

FADING

Abundant song bursts forth to fill
My little home from wall to wall,
Then slowly fades and fades until
I hardly hear the tones at all.

And while the signals swell and fade,
And swell from out my radio,
The microphones where they are made
Send out a constant steady flow,

That falls and rises not. Why then
Should my receiver thusly play?
I wonder if God wonders when
My spirit also acts that way.

GOD THE SHOWMAN

Life is like a show, dramatic,
Tragic, comic, subtle, tense,
We are not alone the actors,
But, as well, the audience.

Rapt, we view the mighty drama
God unfolds so lavishly,
Scene on scene it rolls before us,
Life's enthralling, gripping play.

God the Master Showman bids us
Act our part and watch the score;
Shows us life, then draws the curtain
While we still are wanting more.

I WONDER

I wonder if when I've passed on,
The things I've done while here on earth
Will keep on moving down thru time
And moving on, will prove their worth.

I wonder if the deeds I've done,
Will fan some tiny spark of life
Into a glowing friendliness,
To dull the edge of earthly strife.

I wonder if the life I've lived,
Will leave a little less of pain;
If what I've been has been some good
I will not then have lived in vain.

I DON'T CARE

Say, "I don't care."

When passing you upon the street
A friend goes by without a nod,
A friend who you had hoped would greet
You with a "Howdy" warm and sweet,
Who leaves you feeling like a clod;
When thus he seems to do you wrong
Just keep your head and sail along,
Say "I don't care."

Say, "I don't care,"

When you have called upon someone,
Have laughed and chatted, called again,
Until you feel that you've begun
To form a friendship full of fun,
And when you wait to entertain
Your new found pal; until it's plain
That you are waiting all in vain—
Say, "I don't care."

Say, "I don't care,"

Not spitefully or probably
They'll stay away; but with a mind
That's broad enough to see that they
Were thoughtless too, unknowingly
(The same as you). Then this you'll find:
The good that you do or undo
Depends upon the way that you
Say, "I don't care."

LIVING

It had been a hard day at the office,
He was weary and sick at heart,
The task he had laid, the plans he had made
Were riddled and torn apart.
He returned to his home in the evening
As discouraged as he could be,
Where he saw in the eyes of a woman wise
The man that he wanted to be.

They bludgeoned and cudgelled his spirit,
Out-numbered him twenty to one.
His back to the wall, he battled them all,
Steadfastly refusing to run.
He gave every ounce that was in him,
Steadfastly refusing to flee,
For he knew he had seen in the eyes of his queen
The man that he wanted to be.

With courage increasing and fearless,
With a spirit that stuck to the end,
He kept up the fight, for he knew he was right,
Refusing to yield or to bend
Over odds that were near overwhelming.
He won for he knew he must be
For the mate of his life, his confident wife,
The man that she wanted to see.

LATCH STRINGS

They'd known us for a few short months, no more;
Our paths had barely touched and were to part
And yet they loosed the latch strings of their door
And flung it wide to us with open heart.

We drove out to their cottage by the lake,
Removed the shutters, brought the driftwood in,
Unpacked our car and watched the waves awake
As winds arose where calm and peace had been.

We lived within their cottage for a day,
Were warmed beside their hearth-fire burning bright,
Explored the nooks, and whiled the hours away
And stretched our tired forms to rest at night.

They'd known us for a few short months, no more,
Our paths had barely touched, and were to part
And yet they loosed the latch strings of our door
And came to live forever in our heart.

MOTHER

If I were loathsome, low down, lost,
A "worthless pill"
My life an empty holocaust,
You'd love me still.

If I should fill with hemlock vile
Your meagre cup,
And lose my hold or fall the while
You'd help me up.

Should I forget you for the goal
Of great success
My rise would fill your gentle soul
With happiness.

The man I might have been you see
In me alway,
The flower of what I want to be
Is yours today.

MY THEATRE

My theatre holds only two,
My love and I, I watch the play
That brings me heart's desire. And you
Are life and light and melody.

What more can all the world impart
Than, when the curtains slowly rise,
To see the love within the heart
Behind the footlights of your eyes.

RICHES

A lot of useless useful things
Obscure our point of view,
For while our wants are manifold,
Our needs, indeed, are few.
If we would only pause and think,
We usually would find
That poverty is relative;
A simple state of mind.

The sky above, the grass beneath,
The hills, the trees, the flowers;
The sun that gilds the fleecy clouds,
The shade beneath the bowers,
The silvery splashing waterfall,
The bird that o'er us soars;
All in the open treasure chest
Of Nature's out of doors.

A car to drive, a girl to love,
A radio to play;
A roof above, a job to do
And three square meals a day;
Good health, a friend, an inner shrine
Where faith and hope abide.
If you have these you're rich indeed;
For what is there beside?

REFLECTIONS

The other day when I felt fine
And happy all the while,
Most every person that I passed
Gave me a sunny smile.
Then in a glass I chanced to see
The same smile beaming back at me.

Another day when things went wrong
And I felt cross and blue,
It seemed to fret the folks I met
To make them sullen too.
Then in a glass I saw the frown
My drooping mouth turned corners down.

And so I learned that when my face
Wears anger, joy or pain,
Each stranger, friend or foe, all tend
To give it back again.
For when you view the folks that pass
You're looking in life's looking glass.

A POEM RECIPE

You catch a wee experience,
An atom out of life,
Weave into it the consequence,
And cause of peace and strife,
Then let it smolder in your mind
Until it burns, until you find
A pregnant germ of humankind
Within it rich and rife,

Then while it burns at whitest heat
Pick words that seethingly
Boil out your message beat on beat
For men to read and see;
Cool off, bejewel with gems that tend
To lift the soul, with thoughts that bend
The heart—and there you have, my friend,
A poem recipe.

SCRAP OF PAPER

Little scrap of paper,
Feeble, fragile, frail,
Having hardly weight enough
To tip a tiny scale.

Loose it to the elements;
All the winds that blow
Revel in its impotence,
Cast it to and fro.

Scorned to naught by water,
Yellowed by the light,
Burned to ash by fire,
Swallowed by the night.

Given to the Master hand,
Underneath his pen
Let it bear a message out
To the world and then—

Mighty Titan force that sways
Nations great and small,
Molding destinies of man,
Ruler over all.

Scrap of paper bearing words,
Making mankind free.
God, take my frail uplifted face
And write a thought on me.

THE NEEDLE'S EYE

The needle's eye is small indeed
There's very little to it.
The wealthy have a heavy task
To crowd their burdens thru it.

It may be quite impossible
To such as so construe it.
So all the more respect to those
Who buckle down and do it.

TEACH ME

Teach me ever to earn what I get, oh Lord,
Teach me always to give my best
To the tasks that before me are set, oh Lord,
Let the zest of the quest be the test.

What good are the riches of gold, oh Lord,
As gifts without labor or sweat?
Let me work for the things that I hold, oh Lord,
So I'll value the things that I get.

But above what I've got or I'm getting, oh Lord,
Let me learn how to love and to live,
For the balance of joy that I'm netting, oh Lord,
I must get from the things that I give.

WELL ENOUGH

While climbing up the hill of life
And striving toward its crest,
Perchance you'll find some shady nook
In which to pause and rest,
Where underneath your feet will be
The flowers you have longed to see.

The spot will seem the one that you
Have always dreamed about;
The leafy boughs, the view beyond—
The spring that bubbles out,
And spilling, splashing, seems to say
"Here is the place for you to stay."

Why leave the peaceful quiet spot,
And struggle toward the peak?
Why leave the bower for wealth and power,
Where winds are cold and bleak?
'Twere best for some if they would stop
Before they reach the very top.

WAVES

Outside there sounds a soothing sigh
Of wind and waves that never ceases;
Inside upon the mantel high
My clock ticks time to tiny pieces.
Eternity without my door
Within—the seconds—nothing more.

A vast eternity—and God.
With no beginning—stretching on
To never end—am I a clod
One second here—the next one gone?
Not that! No such 'phem'ral scroll
Can perish me. I have a soul.

THE WAY OF A DREAM

Love may have gone unrequited,
Left nothing but ash in its wake;
Hope may have built me a house on the sand
Whose fall caused a weary heartbreak.

All that I have may have vanished
Driftwood awash in life's stream;
Whatever may go, I'm unconquered I know
As long as God leaves me a dream.

DREAMS IN THE COUNTRY

Into the dusk of a twilight,
Dawn that has hardly begun,
With a barn to clean, and a calf to wean,
Chores that must always be done.

Milking, a meal, and a mower,
Into the heat of the day
To the clickity drone o'er rock and stone
Round endless fields of hay.

Welcome the bell at the noontide,
Welcome refreshment and rest;
Back to the fields, where the heat never yields;
Toil till the sun's in the west.

Raking and cocking and loading,
Sweating it into the mows,
Piling it high, to lie and dry
Till dusk brings the lowing of cows.

Milking, and bedding the horses,
Chores in the lanterns gleam;
Long is a day in the country;
Where is there room for a dream?

DREAMS IN A VILLAGE

Up with the sun for a morning meal
With an egg the hens have laid,
Three blocks down to the office walked
Under a leafy shade.

Dinner at home with the wife at noon,
Back till the set of sun;
Home again at the eventide,
After the work is done.

Supper thru, the garden plot,
And over the fence a friend,
Neighbors to love and gossip about,
Flowers to grub and tend.

Dark and fatigue, and a bath, and bed,
And there you have the scheme
Of a day that is lived in a village;
Where is there room for a dream?

DREAMS IN A CITY

Up with a jump in the morning,
Coffee and doughnuts in haste,
Jostling down to the office,
Never a moment to waste.

Into the thick of the battle
Giving it plenty of punch,
Morning goes by like a racer;
Seventeen minutes for lunch.

Back to the job with a vigor,
Bus'ness must hurry to thrive
Afternoon faster than morning
Out of the office by five.

Dinner at six in the evening,
Time to relax? Not at all;
Dress for a show or a party,
Home when the hours are small.

Laden with labor and pleasure,
Crowded with joy it would seem;
Such is a day in the city;
Where is there room for a dream?

DREAMS IN THE HEART

So filled, it seems, is life with work and play
That, times to pause and dream there never are,
To look upon a flower, sky or star;
No single pause in either night or day
To life the eyes above and gaze away
Into the land of make-believe afar,
Till Industry, enthroned like a Czar,
Has crushed and broken dreams beneath its sway.
Nay, ponder this: of man's abundant store
Is not the urge to work and laugh supreme?
Alike in country, town, and city's roar
They build together, weaving out the scheme
Of Heart's Desire that beckons on before,
Fond Heart's Desire—God's greatest gift—a dream.

THE WORLD GOES ON

The world goes on;
How strange it seems;
I can not see
How, here and yon
Thru misery,
Thru broken dreams
The world goes on.

The world goes on;
It matters naught
That hearts are bled,
It does but don
A rose of red,
As pleasure fraught
The world goes on.

The world goes on,
So near at hand
Yet far away.
Some day anon
My soul of grey
May understand—
The world goes on.

The world goes on—
It does not give

One glance aside—
And you are gone—
And life has died—
And I must live—
The world goes on.

THE BEGGAR'S SONG

Misshapen, sunken clod of clay,
Nerve shattered, grovelling;
Could ought of charm or harmony
Sway such a sodden thing?
He sang—and from his withered throat
Came golden note on golden note.

A beggar, impotent and crude
At odds with right and wrong;
How could he bear similitude
To heaven's holy throng?
Yet in this groping claybound clod
There lurked a soul to sing—thank God!

LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

A meek and lowly man was He,
The years He labored, only three,
Back there in little Galilee,
Long, long ago;
And now, two thousand years away,
Behold the dawning of His day
When mighty empires bow to pay
Him homage low.

Twelve followers were all He made
Twelve lowly, weakly men, afraid
When one of them their Lord betrayed,
And soldiers came;
His diadem, a thorny crown,
His robe a humble private's gown;
Now all the world is bending down
To praise His name.

No friend to help when death did loom;
His bed a cross, the sky His room,
His sepulchre, a borrowed tomb
For three dark days;
Yet always flowers, birds, and Spring,
And men at Easter time will bring
Their very hearts and souls to sing
His Holy praise.

NEW SIGHT

The blues of heaven delighted me,
The green of grass was good to see,
All nature made me glad to be
Alive, you know.
I used to revel as I sat
Upon the hills to view the mat
Of Maytime's golden weave, but that
Was years ago.

Then light began to sink away,
To blur and dull the lines of May.
'Till twilight filled the place where May
Had always been
Twin curtains fell across my eyes
To shut me from the starlit skies
Fell slowly down to never rise
And I within.

And then a glorious gleam of light
Came pouring down into my night,
And gave me back thru second sight
New worlds to know;
Now midnight has a brighter blue
For in its iridescent hue
The stars, this time, are shining thru
My radio.

IN LIFE

A WORD

He was almost thru, but thought he was wrong,
Altho he had done his best.
A friend disapproved as he passed along
And spoke of the work in jest.

Despair and discouragement followed fast
Till he all but gave up the quest.
With success in his grasp he stopped at last
Because of the thoughtless jest.

He was almost thru, but he thought he was wrong,
Altho he had done his best.
A friend complimented him passing along
And spoke of the work with zest.

He finished the job, he did it up brown,
For hope was in his breast.
He's now a success, the talk of the town,
Because of a word of zest.

THE BOOB

He asked as he started "Can I get a raise
By proving I'm worthy and good?"
They said "Not a chance in the world for a raise
We're paying more now than we should."

He started to work with his mind on a raise
For wages were meagre and low;
He said "If I'm good they may give me a raise."
His boss said emphatically "No!"

He steadily worked for he wanted a raise,
And nobody noticed a bit.
He told me "I think that I'll ask for a raise."
I answered "You might as well quit."

He said "I am going to ask for a raise."
His foreman said "You will regret it."
He went to the boss and requested a raise,
And I'm darned if the boob didn't get it!

FOUND: A SMILE

I looked in vain for a sunny smile
In a city's busy throng.
What did they seek, that they hurried so,
Power, or gold, or a song?

The smiles that were trampled underfoot,
Where crowds surged up and down
I found in a quiet little store
In the heart of a country town.

Power, and gold, and a smile that sings;
The two do not bring the third,
For a smile is a flower that blossoms best
Far away from the hurrying herd.

HORSES TO RIDE

Life is a highway of ups and downs
And you cannot avoid or eschew it,
And you're either the one who is ridden along
Or the rider who rides his way thru it.

Its as easy to ride as be ridden, my lad,
With plenty of teams if you know it;
The choice is all yours, there are horses galore,
Choose and saddle a pair e'er you rue it.

Four mounts like Endurance, Force, Energy, Truth
Are good anyway you construe it,
But the team that will carry you farthest along
Is Thinkofathing and Doit.

IS TO BE

You know the line; you heard it when
You were a child, "It might have been,"
A sad and melancholy rhyme
To dull the edge of vigor prime.
Do you review your hopes and fears
By gazing back across the years,
And, dwelling on the changeless past
Honor it with flags half mast?

Whene'er a runner runs a race
He strains his body, mind, and face
Straight out ahead, nor stops to learn
What tripped him at the quarter turn.
So if you want to forge ahead
Forget what's done, or, lost, or dead;
Face front, determined, sorrow free,
Leave "might have been" for "is to be."

I CAN

There's little difference between
The men who rise and win
And those who fail; they all are much
The same beneath the skin,
All have their difficulties,
Perplexities to span;
The secret lies in two wee words,
Just two wee words, "I can."

Great men and weak have used them
To bolster up their will,
The words have never failed them,
They've always filled the bill;
They'll fan your fainting spirit,
They'll make of you a man;
You'll win the day, if you'll but say
"I can—I can—I can!"

LIFE'S LADDER

Life's ladder is wide at the bottom
But narrow and steep at the top.
Be cautious and tighten your grip as you climb
Or you'll fall to the bottom kerflop,
From the top.
You'll fall to the bottom kerflop.

Each foot must be firm on the ladder,
Don't falter, nor linger, nor stop.
Let never an obstacle halt you,
If you've only one foot, then hop,
Don't stop.
If you've only one foot, then hop.

Hang tight to each rung that you step on,
Cling hard to each prize that you cop.
It's better to handle the handle
Than be the one under the mop,
Slip slop.
Than be the one under the mop.

NOT WHERE BUT WHITHER

It matters not one whit how far
Thru life's long journey you have come,
Nor what you've been, nor what you are;
A prince or pauper, boss or bum.

If deep within your heart there burn
The sparks that give your spirit life,
And if your face you upward turn,
And keep it up thruout the strife.

If you keep working, striving, friend,
And keep your eyes upon the sky
You need not fear a bitter end;
You're never dead until you die.

So long as you are fighting still,
And still are harnessed to your star,
You've got a chance to breast the hill;
It doesn't matter what you are.

PROCESSIONAL

Twin candlesticks receive the light;
God's shrine with life again is bright.
The organ plays—a muted song
Unmuting starts a choir along,
And swelling fills the church the while
From vestry trooping up the aisle
They come, youth first, its voice raised high
Joy bringing, swinging singing by;
Youth, adolescence, manhood, all
File slowly past me in my stall.
Sopranos, altos, pass along,
Each filled with deeper throated song,
Each part proclaiming in its way
Life's subtle, slow-advancing day.
The tenors, after them the bass
More slowly modulate their pace,
And pour with vibrant strength and power
Their very souls into the hour.
God's minister, his face ashine
With Heaven's glory, ends the line.
They've passed. Still mingled melody
Fills nave, apse, all with harmony
Till chancel reached, their voices die,
Thus light, life, youth, age, God go by.
But hold, service is just begun—
Life begins when life is done.

PAIN

Pain that forever is with us, from the beginning of time
Guarding our wandering footsteps, guiding us into our
prime

Whenever the mind and body, the soul and conscience
hark

To the prickle and crack of the voice that warns of dangers
that lurk in the dark.

Pain, the omnipotent surgeon, scalpel that cuts to the
quick

Pointing to brinks of destruction, scourging the wounded
and sick

Back to right living and healthfulness, when they obey
thy voice,

Leaving them not till hope has gone, who take the other
choice.

Pain, the red light at the open switch, warner of bridges
wrecked

Pain, the mariner's falling glass, friend of the circum-
spect,

Guard rail that edges the highways of life, where they
skirt the precipice,

Pointer that prods men back to the way, when they have
gone amiss.

Driving them out of the valleys, up to the tops of the
hills,

From places of sorrow and darkness, to crests where sun-
light spills,
Enemy always of ignorance, seeking to teach in vain
Men that forever are maiming themselves, and blaming it
all on Pain.

PERSISTENCE

He asked for a job in the office,
They answered emphatically, "No!"
He asked for a job in the office—
Their reply had the force of a blow.

He asked for a job in the office,
"Cut it out, Boob," they said, "you'll regret it."
He asked for a job in the office,
And I'm darned if the Boob didn't get it.

ROLL, STONE, ROLL

Are rolling stones so bald and bare
Because they roll from here to there?
And is it such a futile loss
If they have gathered little moss?

A stone that to the earth is tied,
That rests content and satisfied,
Can ne'er to wondrous deeds aspire
Nor set a waiting world on fire.

A stone that travels down the road
Can make a path and lift a load,
That heavy feet are carrying
And cause a tired heart to sing.

A stone can sleep and grow green hair,
But stones must move to get somewhere.
No stone can loll and grow a soul,
So come to life, and Roll, Stone, Roll.

THE RIGHT FEAR

There's the fear of your job, and the fear of your boss
And the fear that your pay is too small;
There's the fear that you've working too hard or too long:
Man, you've got to subdue them or fall.

All but one and that fear you must hold to your breast
If you want to be counted the one
Who will do any task with a will and a zest,
Who is bound for his place in the sun.

For the fear that will goad you to climb to the top
That will fill you brim full of the stuff
That accomplishes miracles, crushes defeat
Is the fear of not doing enough.

THE SONG OF THE CITADEL

I

I sing of the blow of the mighty sledge,
The ring of the swinging Pick,
The rending wail of tearing wood,
The crash of falling brick,
The ground is now left bare and nude,
Where the wall of a building fell,
And the sound of the fall is a great prelude
To the Song of a Citadel.

II

The rhythmic hiss, and whir-r-r and hiss,
As the steam shovel plays its part,
The road of the truck with its load of muck
And the whine of the Derrick's start.
An Air lock rings a signal tapped
To the man in the Caisson Bell,
They're singing the song, the whole day long,
The Song of the Citadel.

III

Comes steel with the sing-song shout of men,
Where the rattling riveter roars,
The clank of a chain starts a weird refrain,

And the framework upward soars.
The music strikes a higher pitch,
As skyward springs the shell,
Of iron and steel, with groan and squeal
The Song of the Citadel.

IV

The hammers rap, the rip of the saw,
As the floor forms fit into place,
The concrete splash, the trowels quick flash,
As brick walls raise their face,
A softer note strikes ear and eye,
The wild prelude to quell,
And lends a real harmonious peal,
To the Song of the Citadel.

V

The Terra Cotta comes to view,
With its soft and lustrous strain,
Its symmetry adds harmony,
Like a wonderful refrain,
And the song goes on and on,
And over us casts a spell,
Now loud, now low, now fast, now slow,
The Song of the Citadel.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

I

Before me towering like a dream
Within a growing crimson lake
There tower mounds of Jersey cream
Like frosting on a layer cake,
Too thick to run but lazily
All piling up like drapery.

II

Beneath the luscious golden mound
There peep the berries ripe and red
Adrip with juices all around,
So much that from each rosy head,
There runs a ruby winding stream
To join the lake of sweet and cream.

III

And, oh the flaky underneath
That fairly melts and falls apart
Within the mouth, between the teeth,
Delicious dish! The throbbing heart
Alone proclaims what words can't form
To strawberry shortcake rich and warm.

SHORT-CUTS

The road curved and twisted and wound up the hill,
The way was well trodden tho' rough,
It led to a castle of dreams at the crest—
His castle of "money enough."

The going was steady, but irksome and slow,
And the top seemed a long ways away,
Till a little by-road beckoned straight up the side,
"There's a short-cut" I heard the man say.

So he left the main path with its markers and signs,
"This way is much shorter," he said,
"The others can follow the markers and crawl,
I'll beat them by using my head."

The little by-way led him into a wood,
And dwindled and faded until
Where the short-cut had been not a vestige remained.
He was lost on the side of the hill.

For roads that are marked may turn, twist, and be hard,
But they'll never quite lead you astray,
The longest way round is the surest way up,
It's the short-cut that lengthens the way.

TIDES

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
That, taken at its ebb, leads to disaster;
The answer all depends upon the plan,
And will of which you make yourself the master.

It may go farther than you ever thought,
Stark failure flaunt its banner in your face;
The cogs of circumstances may have caught,
And catching, may have jarred you from your
place.

If you've exhausted mind, heart and muscle,
Your spent reserves of power all but gone
And stripped of all you've ever had, can tussle
To hold your fainting will and struggle on;

When Heaven and earth and Hell have tried to
dim it,
If still you keep the battle up you'll win,
For when the tide has reached its lowest limit,
Its bound to stop, to turn, then ebb back in.

THE FOOL

They called him a fool for attempting a feat
That had brought death or worse to his friend;
To face such a danger when life was so sweet,
Inviting an ominous end.

They said "Count the cost; think it over, my lad,
The dangers are frightfully great,
You've only a chance in a million or more;
You're recklessly flirting with fate."

"You're strapping yourself in a chamber of death,
The Ocean is hungry and deep."
"You are hurling yourself toward a watery grave."
"You're taking a perilous leap."

But he flew against death in the race and he beat
For only the glory within it.
If it took such a fool to accomplish the feat
Then thank God there's one born every minute.

THEIR SHIP

Whene'er their ship comes sailing in
And stops beyond the bar,
They fail to see its shoreward prow,
They're looking out too far.

Some other field looks twice as green,
So thither they do fly,
To build anew with busy hands
And watch with straining eye,
Where o'er the waters of the bay
More ships go sailing by.
They wait a day or maybe two,
And then again they hie
Themselves away to newer fields,
Beneath a brighter sky.
So on and on and on they go
Till hope and courage die.

And all the time their ship is there,
Their ship that's always late,
Their ship that never reaches them
Because they never wait.

THE ENGINEER

He visions spires that pierce the skies,
Great bridges span before his eyes,
A dam gigantic rears and fills
A verdant valley 'twixt the hills.
On thunder thru the mountain sides
His pioneering vision rides,
As with untiring brain and brawn
He brings his dreams to greet the dawn,
While concrete, stalwart stone and steel
Their great chaotic forms congeal.
With each one done, away he hastes
Thru cities, towns, and desert wastes
To find another rainbow's end,
And there its yellow pot attend,
For always he is visioning
New dreams, removing worlds to bring
Them into being, clean and clear,
This mighty, migrant engineer.

THIS MAN

How truly great he is;
In stature, brain, and spirit; kindly too,
For while he shapes the course
Of multitudes, he still has time to do
The little deeds of love
To humble common folks, to those who tread
The stony paths; for them
To pluck a thorn, and plant a flower instead.

Good deeds drop from his hand
Like honey from an overflowing bowl.
He loves his fellowmen,
Fraternity deep rooted in his soul;
To labor by his side
Is inspiration, intermixed with love;
To know and see his heart,
Like catching glints of Heaven from above.

His eyes are on the clouds,
His feet firm planted on the solid earth,
Envisioning great dreams,
Yet practical enough to give them birth,
The warning words of men,
Lest he attempt too much; but help him plan
Still greater deeds to do,
This simple, humble, noble, kingly man.

TOYS OR TOOLS

Tools or toys—we ride afar
A train, or in a motor car
We mount the miles; the very air
Is ours to bear us anywhere;
Speed and power are ours to seize;
Ours for progress; ours for ease;
Are they baubles then, or jewels,
Toys or tools?

Tools or toys—we turn a hand,
Great symphonies at our command
Enrapture us; we speak a word,
Across the nation it is heard.
Can things we've made, make us today
Selfworshippers, their slaves; are they
Constructive joys, or just decoys,
Tools or toys?

Toys or tools—we rub a coin
And earth and air their forces join
To serve us—wings or fins or feet,
To lift us to the seer's seat,
Or smother us in uselessness,
Possessed by things that we possess;
Consuming or inspiring fuels,
Toys or tools?

Tools or toys—our forebears bled
And died that we might forge ahead;
Such hard won symbols, cymbals are
If we can only look that far;
Within our palms the power lines
To singe, or fire our souls to rise,
Power that kindles, cools, or cloys;
Tools or toys?

THERE'S A TIME

There's a time when it pays to be loser,
There's a time when its better to win,
There's a time when the devil's the chooser,
When you barely squeeze thru with your skin.

There's a time to be silent as midnight,
There's a time to talk plenty and fast,
Times to be generous, times to be tight,
To be first, and again to be last.

There's a time to admit you're mistaken,
There's a time to administer shock,
There's a time when you have to be shaken,
There's a time to be firm as a rock.

There's a time to beat fists on the table,
There's a time to sit firm in your chair;
But there's never a fractional second of time
To be anything else but square.

NO SUBSTITUTE

You've heard of drag, and pull, and luck
To shove a fellow thru
To better wages, better jobs,
And bigger things to do.
But if you want promotion quick
To bring you in more pelf,
Just hitch your own good luck up
And pull and push yourself.

Success is not a secret;
She always weds a will,
She's always vainly looking for
The man who fills the bill.
So if you'd climb, you foreman, boss,
Or office boy, or clerk,
There isn't any substitute
For plain hard work.

FACTS

He wasn't especially clever,
There wasn't so much that he knew,
But he wasn't a shirk, and was willing to work
So they put him in charge of a crew;
He fell into worries and trouble,
He couldn't see any way thru;
Then he gathered possession of all of the facts,
And the facts showed him just what to do.

They put him in charge of the office,
Where energy, thought, and finesse
Were needed to handle their problems,
And nothing was done on a guess;
He started with care and with caution,
He didn't work into a mess,
For he gathered possession of all of the facts,
And the facts took him thru to success.

THE HAPPIEST ONE

Some work for wealth and power
And others for their bread,
And some from force of habit
To merely get ahead.

Some work for clothes and plumage,
Some simply work for hate,
Some work to beat the Joneses
And some for robes of state.

Some work for glory's banner,
And some to stand the test,
And some to find excuses
That they may stop and rest.

Men work for love of honor;
Men work to cheat and rob,
But the happiest one of all is he
Who works for the joy of the job.

UP

Out of a shadowy half-formed dream
Comes the rattle of wheels, the clump of feet
And clink; on the porch goes the bottle of cream,
It's the milk-man on his morning beat.

He rattles on and all is still,
Then in there floats the voice of a bird
With a throaty whistle and golden trill,
As out of my dreams again I'm stirred.

A starter's whir-r-r-r, the roar of a car,
A neighbor of mine goes whizzing away,
The siren note of a whistle far,
Proclaims the break of another day.

Then comes the raucous ting-a-ling-ling,
The alarm has started it's morning fun.
I roll over, yawn, and stop the thing
Jump out of bed and the day's begun.

IN NATURE

AUTUMN IN A COURT

Four walls of brick press in upon
The windows of a room,
A lawn of cold and grey concrete
Where grass and flowers should bloom.

Above a mouldy parapet
Of crumbling masonry
A patch of sky that struggles hard
To filter in the day.

Within the middle of the court
A straggling little tree,
Her scant clad arms spread hopefully,
A lonely refugee.

But once a year she preens herself
In gorgeous array
To dance and sing with merry winds
That never come her way.

Expectantly she waits, and waits
All radiantly sweet
Till one by one her dresses fall,
Dead leaves on cold concrete.

LILAC BUSH

Wide spreading gossamer of purple lace
Against the greening background of the trees,
Your fountain lifts its flower crested face
And fairly splashes fragrance on the breeze.

Wee purple blossoms, sparkling drops of dew,
Poised all in clusters, each a sprig of spray,
There's Heaven in the glory of your hue,
For God alone can weave such tracery.

EARTH SONG

I hurried into nature full of pride
To learn her way, to let her speak to me,
And then to set it down in poetry
For other folks to feel. Self-satisfied
I sought to speak her tongue, to sing her song.
To move mankind another step along.

And nature gently took me to her breast,
A tired child o'erburdened much with play;
With soothing song she sang the hours away,
And lullabied my soul to sleep and rest,
And while I slept within her arms it seemed
Her heart crooned out a message as I dreamed.

Its roots were deep in things that always were;
It stretched its tendrils thru a timeless past,
Straight to and thru the present till at last
It lost itself in future's formless blur.
So nature, thru a wave, a fern, a pine,
Soft sang earth's song, earth's poem, line on line.

Awake again, I know that what I'd heard
Would be profaned, if sung by such as I;
This song of hill and valley, sea and sky,
This song of earth, of flower, bee and bird
Could sing its silvery self to all who yearned
Thus gladdened, humbled, silenced, I returned.

JULY

When the molten ball of a summer sun
Crawls up thru a blue hot sky,
And burns the lawn, till the grass is gone
And the ground lies bare and dry.

When silence roars in your ears like noise,
As the insects cease their whir-r-r,
When the ghost of a breeze moves the tops of the trees
And you hear the branches stir.

When dust curls up thru lifeless leaves,
When heat shimmers up from the hill,
Man, beast, and all, but barely crawl,
E'en flies in the air stand still.

When the blistering ball of a copper sun
Seems to melt the very sky,
And you pray in vain for a drop of rain
That's a day in the month of July.

LOVERS

There is within a field beneath a tree
A trysting place where leafy boughs bend near,
To kiss a little stream upon her cheek
And whisper low sweet secrets in her ear.

They must be jolly secrets full of fun,
For while the branches shake their sides with glee
She tosses back a curl of silvery spray,
And ripples out in laughter merrily.

I wonder what they always talk about?
Of love, perhaps, that evermore shall be.
The little stream that laughs forevermore up
Into the eyes of her protecting tree.

NOMADS

The ground slopes down beyond our door
Beneath great elms to meet the shore,
Where white capped waves, from far away
Across the blue, roll in to play.

And thru our windows we can see
Wee tufts of smoke steal lazily
From where the lake edge meets the sky
To tell of great ships sailing by.

Behind us, thru the poplar trees
A whisper in a wandering breeze,
Past fields of checkered green and brown,
Amidst a blaze, the sun goes down.

It may be ours for but a day;
But ours no less the while we stay,
For our home is a car that's swift and clean
And our yard—the lawn of a camping green.

SUNRISE

Upon a stretch of canvas splashed
Were colors of a masterhand.
With mighty pigments he had dashed
A fiery sky, a strip of land,
And in its midst a burnished sun
Where glorious day had just begun.

Within the pages of a book
Of prose (or was it poetry?)
Within a cosy inglenook
Were works that led me far astray,
Where living, marching, magic drawn,
Around me spread a golden dawn.

A strain of misty music low
Crescendoeed with a growing light
Into a great fortissimo
That, rising, crashed the shades of night,
As thru its pulsing symphony
It sang the song of dawning day.

Grey turned to mauve, and mauve to gold;
A silvery segment, disk of fire
Came peeping, creeping thru the mold
Of earth's horizon higher, higher,
Till, all ablaze with dazzling light,
The sunrise burst upon my sight.

Thus picture, prose, and poetry,
And music too, their arts combine,
As breathed upon by break of day
Men rise to rapture, line on line
To lift their souls above the clod,
Out of the night, t'ward dawn and God.

TO A PANSY

Impish little pansy
Smiling gayly up at me,
I wonder if your roguish eyes
Can really truly see.

For if they're looking out on life
They're seeing nothing sad,
Else why would they be dancing so,
To look so gay and glad.

Impish little pansy
Tell me what it is you see
So I can smile and nod and sing
As merrily as thee.

THE ROAD

Let me drive on a road that curves and bends,
That dips in a valley, that climbs a hill,
Unfolding itself like the leaves of a book,
One page at a time, each stretch a thrill.

The kind of a road that loses itself
Within a wood or behind a tree,
That coyly peeps from across the vale,
And grudgingly yields itself to me.

That hurdles a stream, then skirts its bank,
Where sun and shade bemottle its face,
As it winds beneath an arch of boughs,
An arch of living leafy lace.

A road that clings to the side of a hill,
That rises and falls like the thread of a song.
Be it narrow or wide, I'll follow it still,
Where it goes doesn't matter, if you're along.

SONG OF THE SHORE

Where e'er the roving land comes down
To greet the bay, the lake, the sea,
The pond, the brook, the river, there
You'll find the dwelling place of me.

The tired driftwood, worn and bruised,
Within my outstretched arms finds rest,
And grasses send their tendrils down
To gather nurture at my breast.

I am the ancient trysting place,
Where come the curly headed trees
To whisper secrets to the waves,
To sigh and talk about the breeze.

Where little ripples laugh and romp,
I stoop to greet them tenderly,
And where the great waves pound my walls
I stand and hold them all at bay.

The water sings a song to me
With splashing swish and angry roar,
They one and all belong to me,
I hold them all; I am the shore.

SONG OF THE ROCK

The rain, the snow, the wind, the sun
May beat upon my face;
I love their force as each one tries
To move me from my place.

I like to lie upon my back,
And watch an angry sky
Flash light'ning and thunders out,
To vanquish such as I.

I laugh at all who fling themselves
Against my granite wall,
Except, perhaps, my enemy
The seething waterfall.

For who will win the endless strife
As foaringly we lock?
The waterfall that o'er me spills,
Or I, the virgin rock?

TO A SEED

Oh little seedlet in the earth,
That seeks the sun that gave you birth,
You struggle up thru stubborn sod
To catch a glimpse of light and God.

You spread your little leaves in prayer
Beseeching God to bless you there,
Then glorify your earthly hour
Pouring your soul into a flower

That, when it seeds leaves tenderly
A poignant fragrant memory
Brightening all your woodland dell;
I wonder, Can I do as well?

TREE SONG

Under gentle Spring's caress
There budded leaves that lavishly
Clothed me in a pretty dress
Where lovers came to laugh and play.

Summer breezes kissed me there,
Sang their crooning lover's song;
Robins nesting in my hair
Conceived, and bore, and taught their throng.

Autumn came and painted me
An evening gown of red and gold,
Danced with me in memory
Of youth, and joy, and love untold.

But Autumn left as did the rest,
And Jack Frost, handsome, debonair,
Took me to his artist's breast
To woo, seduce, and kill me there.

Winter shrouds my lifeless head;
My leaves lie trodden in the clay;
Yet who shall say my soul is dead?
For Spring returns eternally.

WIFE OF THE WIND

With a room of cloud hung blue,
Where stars, turned low, were shining thru,
The Windwife stirred herself and moaned
Upon a snowclad bed, unwarm,
Rolled restlessly a pain racked form,
Breathed audibly, then slowly groaned,

Sank into silence, senseless, numb,
Then broke into a delirium,
In livid torture madly screamed;
Tore at the sky the while she beat
Her fists against the snowy sheet,
Like souls in torment, unredeemed.

All night she filled the anguished air
With sounds of pain too great to bear,
That rose and fell on passion's wing,
Then sank, until at last she died;
But breathing warmly by her side
Lay blue eyed, rosy, newborn Spring.

TWILIGHT ON OUR LITTLE STREET

O'er the way a row of houses,
Like a troop of quiet kine,
Patiently await the shadows
Lengthening along the line.

Thru the liquid of the twilight
Porches, doors, and windows run
Into shapes of greying color,
Till a crazy quilt is spun.

Melting patches blur together,
Black against the arch of sky
Silhouetting an horizon,
Jagged, chimney-pierced, awry.

Here a window, there another
Thru the black begin to glow;
Up above, a lawn of billows,
Stars and heaven here below.

Stars in golden constellations
In a topsy-turvy dome
Shine from earth and twinkle skyward,
Each one smiling from a home.

Thru coagulating darkness
Earth and heaven, blending meet;
Night has blanketed the twilight
On our little city street.

FLAPPER TULIP

Gay tulip red,
On tiptoe tugging toward the sun,
Your fiery head
A tilt with life is held as one
Whose years of joy have just begun.

Aglow with spring,
And hardly holding all your glee
You fairly sing
Abandon's song of ecstasy,
Full throated, dancing, fancy free.

Out of your leaves
You gaily spring, as poised above,
Your beauty weaves
A picture rich enough to move
The very earth to warmth and love.

Wee flapper imp,
You strain upon your slender stem
And like a nymph,
Dance to and fro, a living gem,
Full love of life, your diadem.

HAPPY HOUSES

How like a happy human is a house
That smiles benignly on the passer by,
Or slowly winks a curtained window lid
In play upon the world beneath its eye.

How like a happy human is a house
That lifts its face into an April shower
With locks of vines that curl about its eaves,
Caressing, clinging, budding into flower.

How like a happy human is a house,
And how it glows beneath a painted coat,
Or spreads its grassy skirt upon a lawn,
Or wears a saucy rose bush at its throat.

How like a happy human is a house
Behind whose face dwell love's contented joys,
And from whose twinkling windows tinkles out
The lilting laugh of little girls and boys.

IN FUN

SONG

KEY—THREE FLATS

FIRST VERSE—

She loved him for his tenor voice
(They sang in a contat'.)
The rest could only reach G sharp

CHORUS

He got a flat.

SECOND VERSE—

They wed, they parted on the day
They had their only spat.
He promised her a ten room house:

CHO—

THIRD VERSE—

He has a harp in Heaven now,
A halo for a hat.
He traveled ninety miles an hour;

CHO—

INDIAN SUMMER

Trim little feet tripping gracefully,
Skirt that scarce covers a dainty knee,
Swinging along with a grace divine,
Naïveté written in every line.

Sport hat bewitchingly tilted awry,
Raven black hair that's a treat to the eye,
Color and clothes that conform to the letter;
Let's cross the street—we can see her better.

Such a Venus-like form and sinuous grace
Anticipates surely a pretty young face;
But look! It is somebody's little grandmummer;
Instead of the Springtime it's Indian Summer.

WHAT'S WRONG IN THIS PICTURE

Modish, modest suit of grey,
Hat that's chic and smart,
Eyes that speak expressively
From a woman's heart.

Full of quaint elusive charm,
Beautiful, and yet—
I am filled with quick alarm
At your cigarette.

Gentle lady is it style,
Habit, whim, or joke?
As a man I ask you, while
Thoughtfully I smoke.

TWO VETS

A jolly young vet that I met
Had nothing to speak of, and yet
He worked all the while
With a will and a smile,
Twixt industry, labor, and sweat
This vet
Had never a minute to fret.

Another young vet that I met
Had managed a fortune to get
But he was possessed
By his gold, and the best
He could do was to worry and fret.
Which vet
Think you had the better asset?

LEAP YEAR ADVICE

You who read this little verse,
You who need this little verse,
Heed, oh heed this little verse
While you can,
Otherwise your swishing hook,
In life's little fishing brook
May not get one wishing look
From a man.

If each fish and periwinkle
Can perceive your want 'em twinkle
He will plumb your every wrinkle
Every trick;
From your hook away he'll scuttle,
He will neither bite nor buttle
At a bait that isn't subtle
Sly or slick.

When you fish on land or water
For your man be canny daughter
Ere you lead him to the slaughter
Make him sigh;
Keep him guessin', keep him quizzin';
Never let him know you're his'n
Till you have him in your prison
High and dry.

ANOTHER MURDER

"Throw up your hands," the bandit cried,
And frightened him so much,
Instead of throwing up his hands,
The man threw up his lunch.

EDUCATION

He hit him with a tomahawk,
He cleft him in the brow,
He used to be a prude, but boy,
He's open minded now.

PRECOCITY

Willie took a smoke and drink,
And drowned his sister in the sink;
Willie did it on a spree;
Ain't he cute? He's only three.

SHE DID

"And would you mind," he asked her.

"If I should kiss you, kid?"

"I would," she said. He did, she did.

He did, she did, he did.

POOR PETER

Peter, Peter, Pumpkin eater,
Had a wife and tried to cheat her,
She found out and took a shell
And blew poor Peter straight to eternity.

MODERN MARY

Mary had a business man,
His fleece was full of dough,
And everywhere that Mary went
That business man would go.

He followed her from night till morn,
She'd give him no release
Till he was nicely sheared and shorn,
And Mary had the fleece.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
Shining there beside my car,
Why should you so get my goat
On that big policeman's coat?

LITTLE BOY BLUE

Little Boy Blue,
Come blow your horn,
You've a cold in your head
This frosty morn.

VERSE OF SENSE

A skunk with all her little ones
Was lolling in the hay.
A man approached and mama said,
"Now children, let us spray."

MY OLD GIRL

My girl was lily like and long,
Whenever I was with her
She used to sing a snappy song
And zith a zithy zither.

ORNITHOLOGY

They say the bee is lazy,
The dove is quarrelsome,
It may be so, but this I know,
The skunk is no geranium.

SLIPS

"Oh, slip on a slip," said the slip of a girl
To her slip of a pal debonair,
But the slip of a pal had no slip to slip on
So she slipped on the top of the stair.

THE END

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